"Indiana's First Recognized 99/4A User's Group"

MIAMI COUNTY AREA 99/4A HOME COMPUTER USER'S GROUP

Vol. 2 No. 1 P.O. Box 1194 Peru, IN 46970 January, 1984

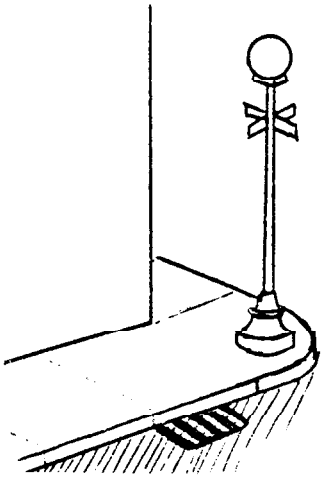
NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

Our users group now has new officers with whom you should all become familiar. The following is a list of those officers:

President- Dave Renkenberger, 219-563-2213
Vice-President- Jeff Bowen, 317-472-1675
Librarian- Tom Weir, 317-472-3192
Sec/Treas- Jim Perkins, 317-472-3029

These people have volunteered to be responsible to guide the group in various areas, however the volumn and quality of user group activity depends souly on the support and involvement of the membership. Please offer your assistance.

We would also like to thank those officers from last year (Greg, Les, Cindy, and Tom) for not only getting us off to a GREAT start but also leading us through the first year, THANK YOU.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER.....INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Here goes nothing!- It's my turn to ramble on and I must admit, it's going to take quite an effort to outramble Greg (sorry Greg, couldn't resist).

Last month we heard a summary of where the Users Group had been during it's first year. Indeed, anyone who was involved should be proud because alot was accomplished and as a result we have an excellent organization. Now, however, it's time to plow forward into a new year.

A primary conern we have to deal with is declining membership. Last year we had 40 to 50 members. As of our January 10th meeting we had 12 members on our books. Two things need to be done right away. First those members who have not renewed their membership must be encouraged to do so. Secondly we need to locate new computer owners and offer the Group to them. It has always been my opinion that every member of an organization is an asset and that the broader a group's membership base is the more talent is available to the group.

Another area we need to explore is discovering talent within the Group. This becomes more important every day. The times are gone when hardware and software were available in expanding quantities. We are going to have to start doing what we should have been doing all along. We are going to have to start doing it ourselves. As we discoverd during our January 10th meeting, we have members capable of repairing our computers, and we all know that there is a broad base of programming talent available. As far as hardware goes, things could be borrowed or purchased within the Group or, perhaps, contacts could be made with other user groups to see what is available.

Finally I think that we need to look at our meeting format. When a person attends a meeting he or she deserves to come away feeling that it was time well spent. It is my feeling that in addition to the usual business meeting, each meeting should include some form of education or entertainment. Program demonstrations, programming instructions (How does a sort routine work?), and guest speakers all need to be considered. This subject is particularly important to me because I won't have to work as hard at all those meetings.

Well, that's all for this month. See you at the next meeting!

Dave

A REMINDER TO ALL MEMBERS...DUES ARE DUE!

'84 dues are due. Please remember that membership runs from January 1st to December 31st. Members whose dues are not paid by March 31st will be dropped from the membership role. Don't let that happen to you. The Miami County Area 99'er User's Group is still growing, both in members and library material. So get your dues in now and continue to share in the benefits.

NEWS

TI CONTINUES SUPPORT

Although Texas Instruments has halted production on the TI-99/4A home computer, they assure us that they will continue to support us. This support will be fourfold:

1) Repair and service on hardware and software, both in and out of warranty.

2) Toll-free helpline 1-800-TI-CARES

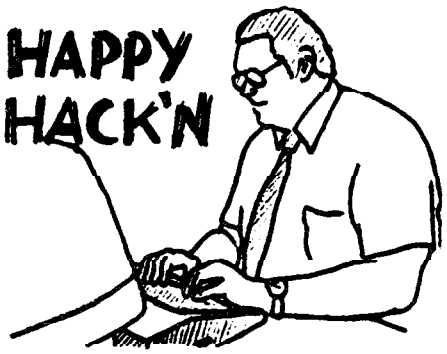
3) Encouragement of 3rd party hardware and software developers.

DON'T QUIT NOW!!

Picture this: it is 1:15 am and you have been programming for 2 1/2 hours. You tell yourself that you will enter 5 more lines then "hit the hay". Then it happens, you reach for the "+" forgetting to let go of the function key and 2 1/2 hours have been wasted ("QUIT" key was pushed).

If you have extended basic and 32 K expansion this does not have to happen. This tip was in Vol. 2 of "The Smart Programmer" from Millers Graphics. Before you start programming type the following: CALL INIT : CALL LOAD (-31806,16). This will disable the "QUIT" key. I like to put this into my programs that use disk files so an open file will not be lost by hitting "QUIT".

TELECOMMUNICATIONS - THE NEW FRONTIER



Greg Greenwald

Telecommunications via personal computers is one of the fastest growing areas of personal computing. Many of you may ask just what is this area of telecommunications. Telecommunications is the connecting of two or more computers so that they may talk to each other and exchange programs and/or files. The connection is usually made over standard phone lines, but it can also be made by radio or even by wiring two computers directly together.

So what does it take to get started in telecommunications? Well first you of course need a computer. For those reading this article that will generally be a TI-99/4A Home Computer. In addition to your computer you will also need an RS-232 interface and a modem of some sort to connect your system to the phone network. The RS-232 interface is a port which allows you to connect your computer to the outside world. Digital information is passed by the RS-232 interface, in a serial fashion, to any device which is connected to the interface. The modem connects to the RS-232 and performs the task of converting the digital information used by the computer into tones which can then be transmitted over the phone system. The modem on the receiving end then converts these tones back into digital information suitable for use by the receiving computer. The RS-232 interface may be either a card for the Peripheral Expansion System or a "stand alone" accessory that plugs into the expansion port on the right side of your computer; both devices work equally well. There are several different types of modems, but they can generally be broken down into two major

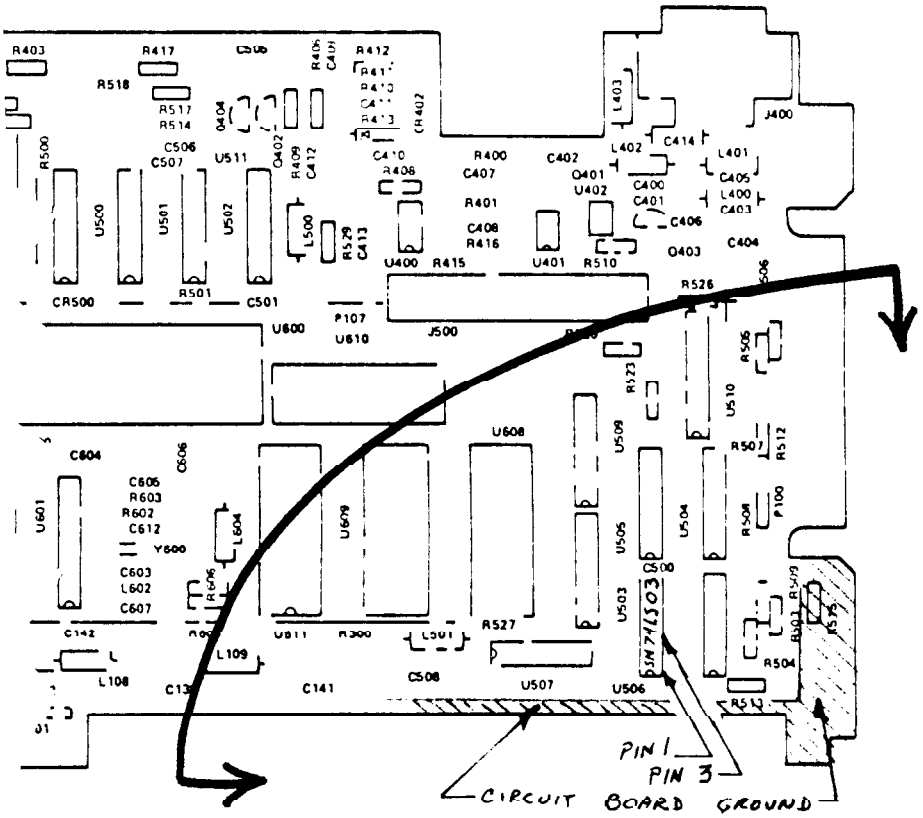
categories, 'acoustic coupled' and 'direct connect'.

An 'acoustic coupled' modem makes no electrical connection to the phone network. You simply dial up the other computer and then place the phone headset into special tight fitting cups on the modem. The modem contains a speaker and a microphone which produce the tones and receive them from the other computer. The 'direct connect' modem provides a more reliable connection because it connects directly to the phone network thereby avoiding any chance of extraneous noise interferring with the transmission. Modems also work at different transmission rates which are generally referred to as "baud rate" or "BPS". Baud rate is the older term but without getting into a technical discussion we can consider the terms interchangeable. The important thing is that both your modem and the modem on the other computer must be using the same baud rate; otherwise you will not be able to communicate. Most personal computers use modems which work at either 300 baud or 1200 baud, with 300 baud being the most popular. A 1200 baud modem allows you to transmit information 4 times faster than the 300 baud unit, but 1200 baud modems cost significantly more than the slower 300 baud units.

Before you venture forth on the telecommunications adventure you will need one final thing, communications software. As in all other areas, your computer needs a program to tell it how to perform the function you desire. That is the job of the communications software. The program takes the characters you type and sends them to the RS-232 interface and the modem; it also takes the characters received by your modem and places them on the monitor or TV screen for you to read. Depending on the level of sophistication, the program may also allow you to transfer files and programs between computers and perform other useful functions. Software for this purpose is available in cartridge form for your TI-99/4A Home Computer. The Terminal Emulator II command module allows you to both talk with another computer and to transfer programs or files with another TI-99/4A Home Computer. The cartridge also provides an unlimited vocabulary for the Speech Synthesizer if you have one attached to your computer.

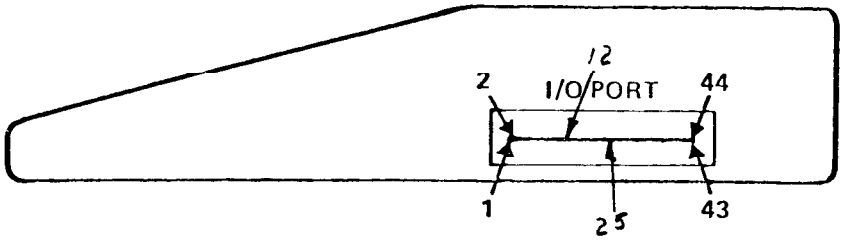
With those few items you are ready to go "on the air" and venture forth into the exciting world of telecommunications. Next month I'll discuss just what you'll find in this new world that will make computing more enjoyable for you and your family. Until then, wanna chat?

THE HAPPY HACKER



TI-99/4A LOGIC BOARD COMPONENT LOCATION DIAGRAM

RIGHT SIDE VIEW



CONNECTOR PIN IDENTIFICATION DIAGRAM

Miami Couty Area 99/4A H.C.U.G.
P.O. Box 1194
Peru, IN 46970